



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN  
THEODORE LEVIN UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE  
231 WEST LAFAYETTE BLVD.  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226

CHAMBERS OF  
**DENISE PAGE HOOD**  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

(313) 234-5165

November 29, 2010

Mr. Corbin Davis, Clerk of the Court  
Michigan Supreme Court  
P.O. Box 30052  
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: ADM File No. 2010-18  
Proposed Amendment of Rule 6.1 of the Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct

Dear Mr. Davis,

I am writing to urge the Court to adopt Alternative B—the State Bar of Michigan Representative Assembly proposal—as the new MRPC 6.1.

I am writing in three roles: as co-chair of the Michigan State Planning Body for the Delivery of Legal Services to the Poor; as a member of the State Bar's Pro Bono Initiative; and as Chair of the Pro Bono Committee for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.

The State Planning Body is a group of about 35 lawyers, judges, and community group leaders that work with providers of free legal assistance (civil and criminal) to assist them in planning and coordinating the delivery of services on a statewide basis. One of the ongoing agenda items of the State Planning Body is the improvement of pro bono systems.

The State Bar's Pro Bono Initiative (PBI) is the Bar's standing committee on pro bono. This is the group that initially developed the version of Rule 6.1 that is now the Court's Alternative B.

The Pro Bono Committee of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan recruits pro bono lawyers for prisoner civil rights cases and for other indigent civil litigants. I chair the Committee and assist in recruiting and training pro bono attorneys as well as screening and referring cases to pro bono panel members.

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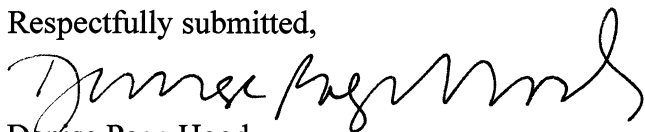
Along with the Detroit Chapter of the Federal Bar Association's Pro Bono Committee, the Court Committee sponsors training workshops in special areas. These have included: prisoner civil rights, employment and foreclosure-related federal law. Currently, we are working on establishing a pro se help desk. At the Federal Bar Association's State of the Court luncheon in September, we recognized 96 individuals – attorneys (82), staff and students – for their pro bono service to our Court.

With this background, I have come to appreciate the value of pro bono services, especially to persons involved in complex legal proceedings involving important rights. I have also come to appreciate the many lawyers who volunteer their time to take pro bono cases. I admire the work that they do and believe that this work fulfills the ideal of access to justice. I have also come to appreciate the role that the Bar and Judiciary play in providing guidance and leadership on pro bono issues. I feel that pro bono work reflects the highest ideals of our profession and that, as judges, we have a responsibility to support that work.

In my role as a member of the PBI, I was involved in the drafting of the State Bar proposed Rule 6.1 (Alternative B). I can assure you that there was no ideological agenda in the drafting of the proposal—the PBI simply took the ABA model rule and edited it to reflect the specific guidance contained in the Michigan Voluntary Standard for Pro Bono Participation. I support the goals of the Bar rule—to provide guidance to lawyers about how to fulfill their pro bono responsibility and to compile the various Bar and Court materials regarding pro bono in a single place.

I believe that this proposed rule will be of tremendous assistance to the non-profit organizations that provide support to pro bono lawyers and to courts that administer their own programs. I urge the Court to adopt Alternative B (the State Bar proposal) as the new MRPC 6.1.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denise Page Hood", written in a cursive style.

Denise Page Hood